Exhibit A

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

APOLLO'S 2000
2875 W. CERMAK RD.

CITY OF CHICAGO
Brandon Johnson, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Ciere Boatright, Commissioner

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Map	2
Building Design and Construction	2
A New Chapter: Apollo's 2000	10
Architect Alexander L. Levy (1872-1955)	12
Movie Exhibitors Louis and Meyer Marks	14
Criteria for Designation	16
Significant Historical and Architectural Features	19
Select Bibliography	20
Appendix: Owner Javier Galindo on Establishing Apollo's 2000	21

Apollo's 2000

(Former Marshall Square Theatre)

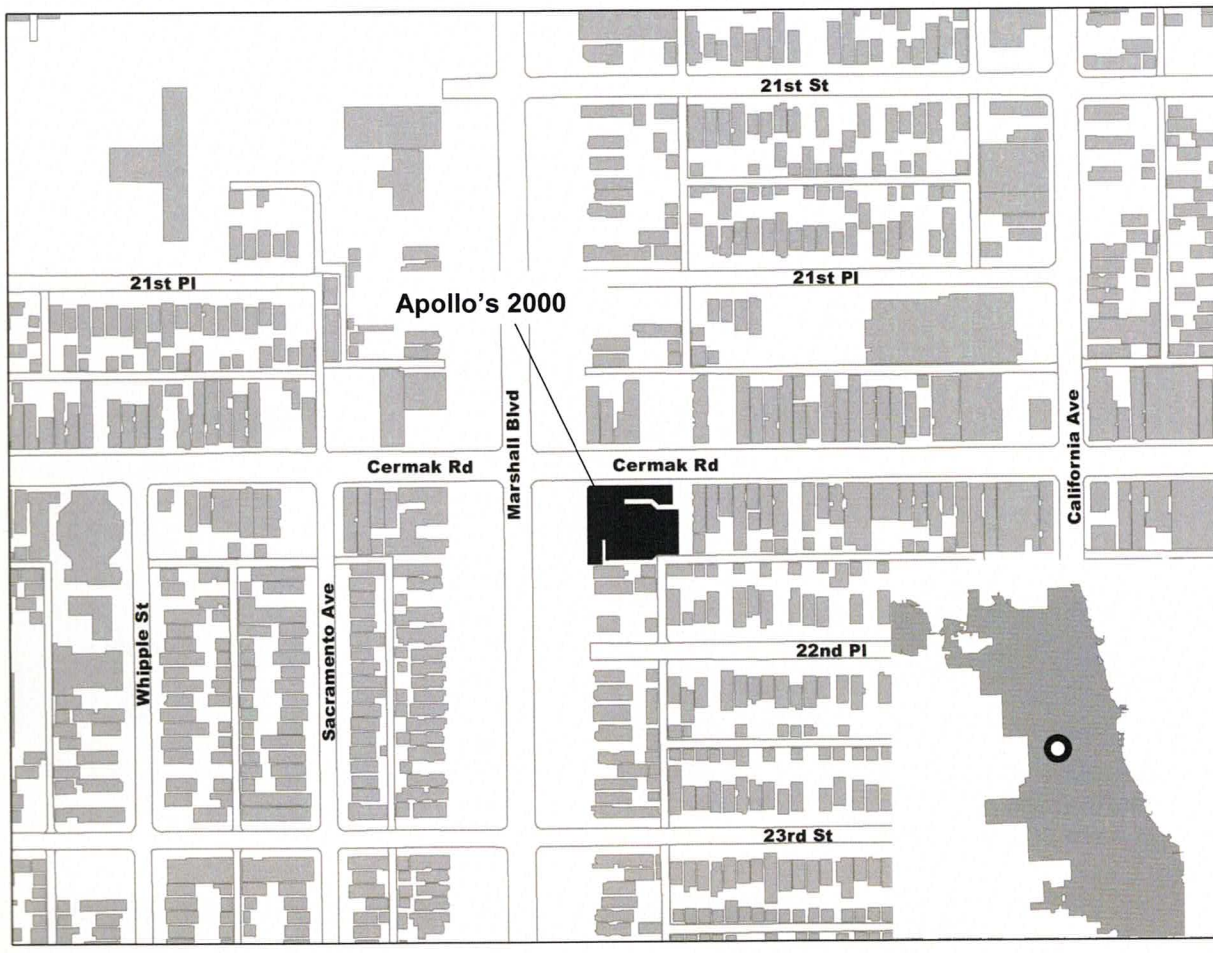
2875 W. Cermak Rd.

Constructed: 1917

Architect: Alexander L. Levy

Apollo's 2000 is currently a popular performance and event venue located in an historic theater, built as the Marshall Square Theatre in 1917. The theater was designed to showcase the then novel entertainment of silent motion pictures. Like most cinemas built in the early twentieth century, the Marshall Square Theatre employed dramatic architecture, in this case a Beaux Arts exterior and interior, with spectacular lighting to attract customers and to convey a sense of luxury and fantasy. The theater was commissioned by brothers Louis and Meyer Marks, Chicago film exhibitors who in the 1920s would go on to build some of Chicago's most opulent movie palaces. The Marshall Square was designed by Alexander L. Levy, the Marks's architect of choice who became a master of movie theater design.

Suburbanization and television led to the decline of Chicago's historic movie theaters with many lost to demolition. The survival of the Marshall Square Theatre is credited to Javier and Lidia Galindo, Mexican immigrants who purchased the darkened theater in 1989. In 1990, they rechristened the building as Apollo's 2000 and have successfully converted it to an event and performance venue that has become a cultural hub in the Little Village neighborhood and wider Hispanic community of Chicago. Beginning in the 1990s, Apollo's 2000 hosted Spanish Rock and Pop as well as Latin Jazz performers that were well attended and demonstrated a substantial market for Latin music that had been ignored in Chicago. In addition to events and music, Apollo's 2000 is remarkable for the variety of its programming including children's theater, lectures by noted authors, political fundraisers and election watch parties, and support for non-profit organizations. Presently, Apollo's 2000 continues to be owned, operated, and managed by Mr. & Mrs. Javier Galindo and their three daughters Evelyn, Isis, and Naomi Galindo.



Apollo's 2000 is located at the southeast corner of W. Cermak Road and S. Marshall Boulevard in the Little Village neighborhood of the larger South Lawndale community area.

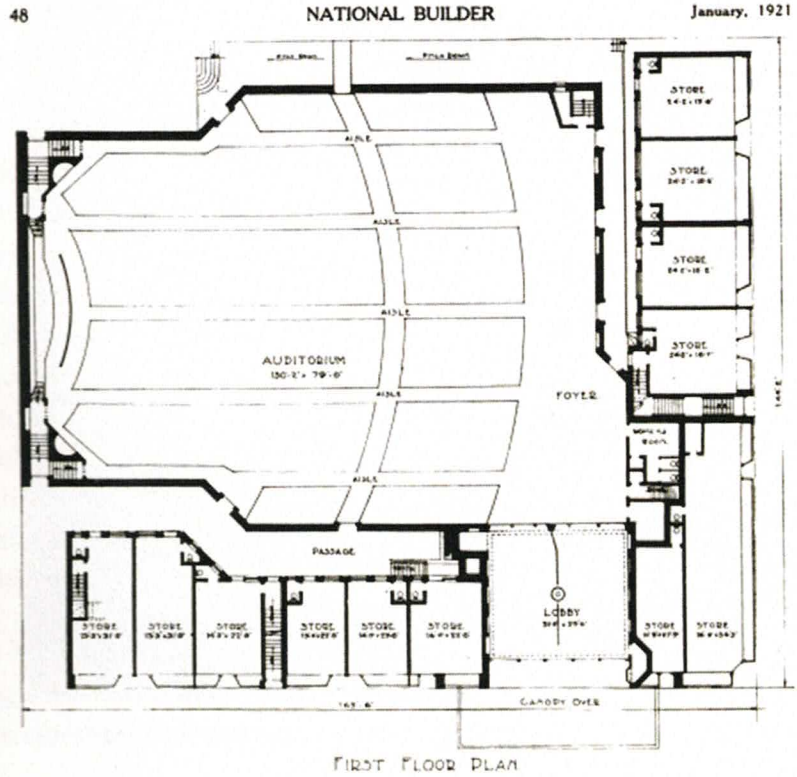
Building Design and Construction

In the spring of 1917, the *Chicago Tribune* reported that theater operators and brothers Louis and Meyer Marks, had partnered with Julius Goodman and Louis Harrison to build a theater at the southeast corner of W. 22nd Street (W. 22nd Street was later renamed W. Cermak Road, after the Mayor of Chicago, Anton Cermak, who died from a bullet in Miami meant for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt) and S. Marshall Boulevard. The new theater was named after Marshall Square, the historic name for the surrounding neighborhood that has since been replaced by the more widely-recognized term Little Village. The announcement for the new building identified Alexander L. Levy as the architect and detailed plans for 2,600 seats in the theater as well as rental storefronts and offices. Some aspects of the planned building never materialized, such as Turkish and steam baths, and the seating capacity was scaled back to 1,800. After eight months of construction, the theater opened on December 22, 1917, with a screening of "His Mother's Boy" and the "The International Sneak," two silent films accompanied by a ten-piece orchestra, organ, and vocalist Ruth Holdt.

An early photograph of the theater. Like many theaters of this vintage, the original marquee and blade sign have been replaced. Source: archives of the Theater Historical Society of America.

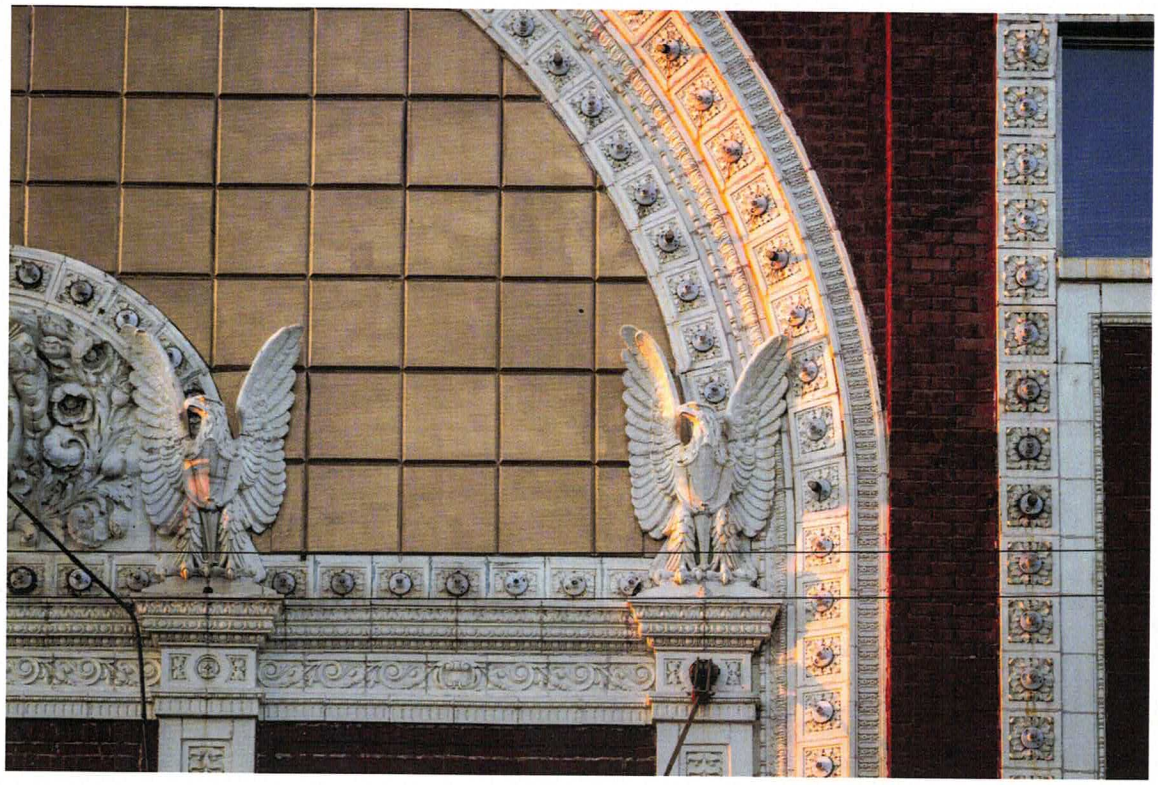
A 1921 nighttime photograph of the Marshall Square Theater studded with hundreds of lights. Source: *The National Builder*. v. 64 (January 1921).

A current photograph of the main elevation facing Cermak Road. The theater entrance is marked by a large arch flanked by towers topped with domes. The cream colored terra cotta was manufactured by the Midland Terra Cotta Company of Chicago.



Floor plan of Marshall Square Theater

The plan of the building showing the theater auditorium set within two wings containing storefronts. Passages between the stores and auditorium provided emergency egress. Source: *The National Builder*. v. 64 (January 1921).



Ornamental terra cotta details include sculptural eagles (above), cartouches and festoons (below) that are influenced by Beaux Arts style of architecture.

The theater occupies a prominent site at the western portion of Cermak Road, a well-travelled commercial street in Little Village. The corner location lends the building two street-facing facades clad in red-pressed brick trimmed with cream gloss terra-cotta. The main north elevation with the theater entrance and marquee spans 163 feet on Cermak. The west elevation extends144 feet on S. Marshall Blvd. The east elevation facing a vacant lot and the south elevation fronting the rear alley are common brick with no architectural treatment.

The compact site plan of the building consists of the main volume of the theater set inside the L -shape of street-facing storefront wings. Open passages between the theater and wings provide emergency egress for the theater. The building is two- and three-stories in height. The structure is fireproof and consists of a concrete foundation with load-bearing brick walls, steel roof trusses and concrete floors and roof plates.

The architectural focal point of the building is the theater entrance which is treated as a tall arch framed by square towers. The top of the arch terminates with a cornice, and the flanking towers are topped with domes, all rendered in terra-cotta with classical details. A secondary terra-cotta arch frames a flat panel of terra cotta with ornamental terra cotta including sculptured eagles and a *mascaron*, or female face. A large, illuminated blade sign projecting from the arch identifies the building as Apollo's 2000. Below this, a marquee projects from the façade over the sidewalk-level ticket booth and the theater's eight entrance doors.

Like many theaters in Chicago of this vintage, the current blade sign and marquee are not original. The original blade sign, reading "Marshall Square Theatre" was significantly lower in height. The original marque was thinner than today's version and was decorated with classical detail to compliment the design of the building.

To the left of the theater entrance, a row of six storefronts marches eastward on Cermak Road. The stores have large storefront windows with transoms and recessed entrances with mosaic tile thresholds. A terra-cotta-framed entrance marked "Offices" in the middle of the storefront row leads to rental offices on the second floor above the storefronts. The second-floor office windows are set in terra-cotta arches with classical molding and cartouches. This storefront and office wing is topped with a prominent terra-cotta cornice with shields and classical festoons. Historic photos of the building show that the cornice was originally topped with terra-cotta finials with incandescent bulbs, though these were removed early in the building's life. Most of the remaining exterior light sockets encrusting the terra cotta remain and number in their hundreds, if not thousands, creating a spectacular level of architectural illumination by 1917 standards.

The Marshall Boulevard elevation was also originally conceived of as a storefront and office wing with the same architectural treatment as the Cermak elevation. Over time, several of the large storefront windows on this elevation have been rebuilt as brick arches.

Much of the building's architectural interest derives from its terra-cotta ornament which was manufactured in Chicago by the Midland Terra Cotta Company. Stylistically, the ornament employs the Beaux Arts style of architecture, an elaborate style typically employed for grand homes and public buildings including train stations, clubs and hotels. Like other historic architectural styles employed by theater designers, the Beaux Arts style conveys a sense of luxury lending the building a strong visual identity. Character-defining elements of the Beaux Arts style seen at Apollo's 2000 include the use of sculptural elements, including the female *mascaron* and eagles above the marquee, as well as classical architectural details including, festoons, cartouches and a range of running molding profiles.

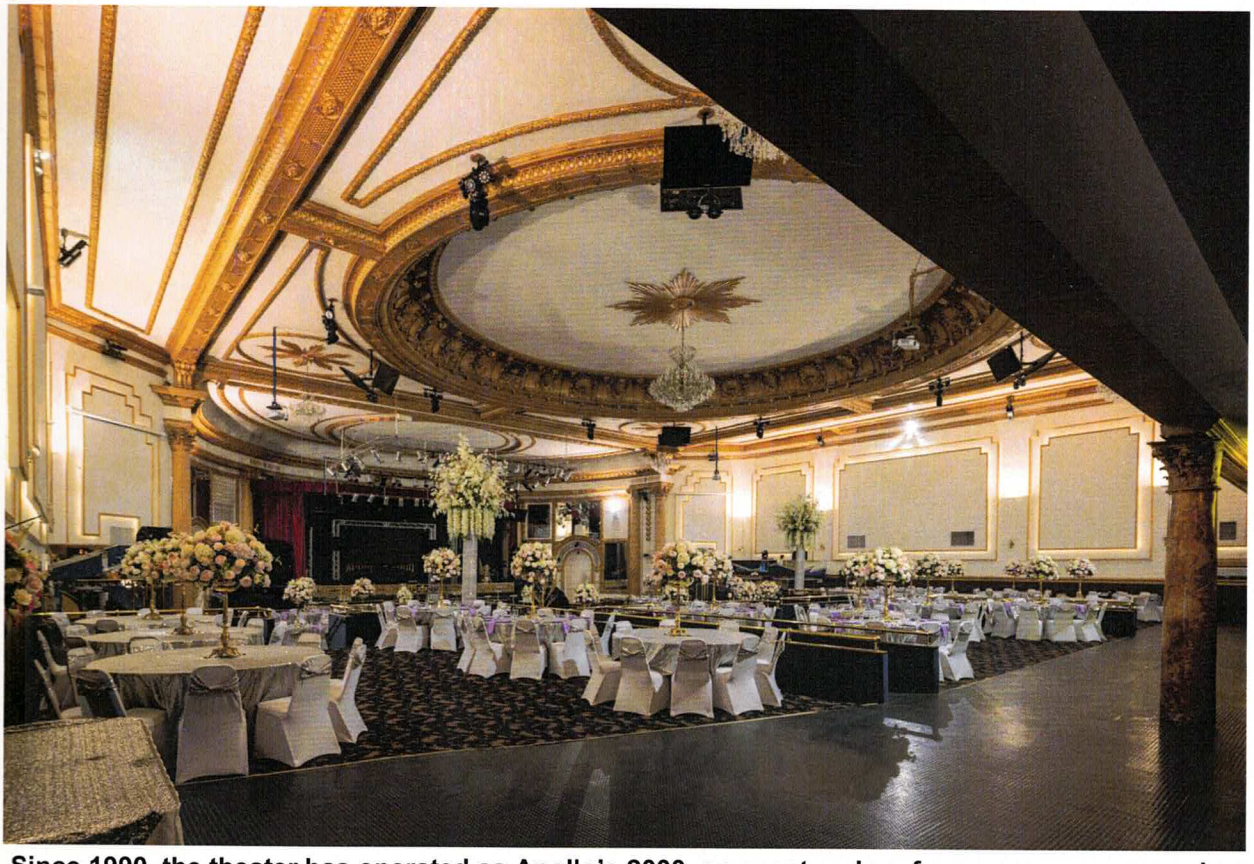
Like the exterior, Beaux-Arts ornament is generously employed on the interior of the theater. Entrance to the theater is made through a grand lobby, a 30-foot square in plan and one-story in height. The ceiling and wall surfaces are heavily ornamented with classical details, moldings, cornices and panels, all with a gold painted finish. The lobby walls have built-in picture frames designed for the display of movie posters. Recessed cove lighting and a suspended chandelier provide illumination.

Passing through this lobby, one enters the theater auditorium which measures 130 feet from stage to rear and 80 feet wide. The stage and proscenium vie with a heavily ornamented ceiling for visual superiority. The stage and proscenium are framed with full-height fluted, Corinthian columns carrying an entablature spanning the stage. The main volume of the ceiling is a flat rotunda framed with an ornamental band of cartouches, scallop shells and modillions. Chandeliers hang from molded starburst patterns in the ceiling. The walls of the auditorium are relieved with panel molding. The projecting booth at the rear of the auditorium is carried on scagliola columns with the appearance of buff marble.

Later History of the Marshall Square Theatre

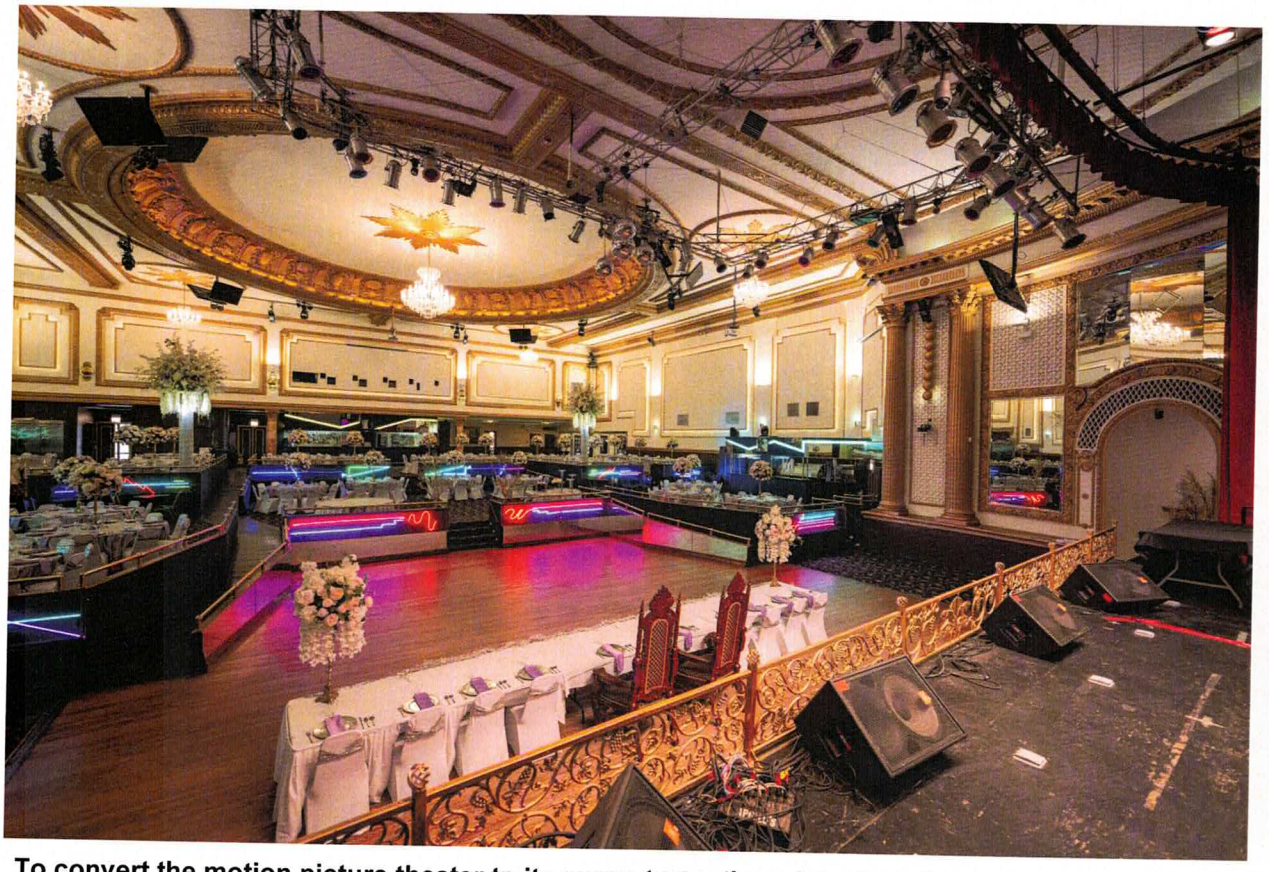
A little over a decade after the Marshall Square Theatre opened, it made the transition from silent films to "talking pictures." However, musical programs remained an attraction at Marshall Square Theatre well into the 1920s when Louis "Doc" Webb led popular organ solos accompanied by slides projected onto the screen. A motion picture trade magazine known as the *Exhibitor's Herald World* noted that in 1929 "a two-reel all-talking picture was booed, and patrons refused to listen to it. But silence took place when 'Doc' started his solo. This house is a cozy little theatre and has big pulling power at the Box Office, and 'Doc,' we believe, helps in that direction quite a bit too." Around the same time, the Marks Brothers, the original owners of the theater, sold the building to Paramount Publix Corporation (later Paramount Pictures) which hired the Chicago firm of Balaban and Katz to manage the Marshall Square.

In 1936, architect Roy B. Blass remodeled the Marshall Square Theatre, adding air conditioning and a larger blade sign that exists today though refaced with the building's current name,

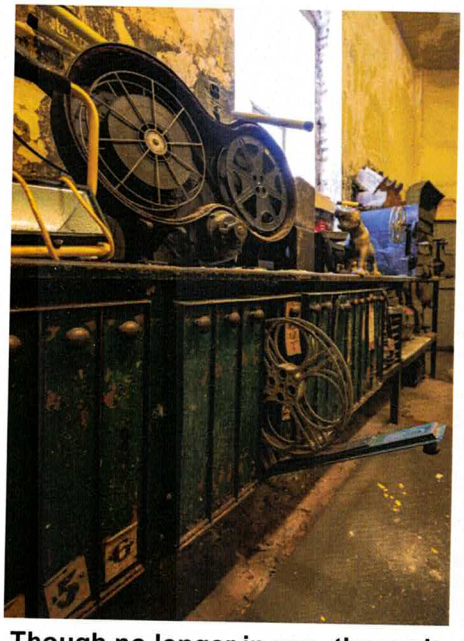


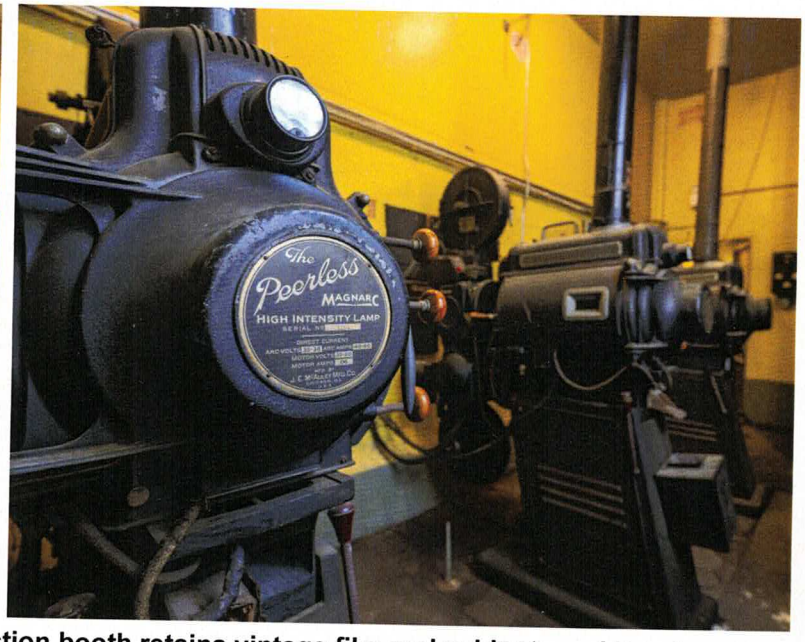
Since 1990, the theater has operated as Apollo's 2000, an event and performance venue owned by the Galindo family. They have preserved the architectural character of the building as seen in this view of the auditorium with its richly ornamented ceiling.

The elaborately decorated entrance lobby with built-in movie poster frames. The rear of the auditorium in the background.



To convert the motion picture theater to its current use, the original seating was removed and the multiple floor levels were added in 1989.





Though no longer in use, the projection booth retains vintage film reel cabinets and Peerless Magnarc projectors which produced light by an electric arc via combustion of carbon electrodes.

Apollo's 2000. One of the support beams for the sign unfortunately damaged the ornamental female face or *mascaron* at the front façade.

As South Lawndale transitioned from a white to Hispanic population in the, the Marshall Square Theatre became known at Teatro Marshall and began programming the Theater with Spanish language films as early as the 1960s. By the 1980s a decline in Hispanic film production led to the closure of the theater by its then-owner Frank De la Torre.

A New Chapter: Apollo's 2000

In 1989, the Marshall Square Theatre was purchased by Javier and Lidia Galindo and rechristened as Apollo's 2000, a performance and event venue which remains a cultural hub for Chicago's Hispanic community. Javier Galindo's reflections on establishing Apollo's 2000 are included as an appendix to this report.

Javier Galindo's family moved to Chicago from Mexico when he was 7. He first visited the Marshall Square Theatre as a 9-year-old, brought there by his family to view "El Gato" a black-and-white Mexican western movie. Galindo spent the 1980s pursuing a career in music as a guitarist and became president of a Hispanic musicians organization.

In 1986, Javier Galindo and his wife Lidia were renting and managing a dance hall, booking and promoting musical performances. In 1987, the hall was severely damaged in a rainstorm; though no one was hurt, the business was no longer able to operate at that location.

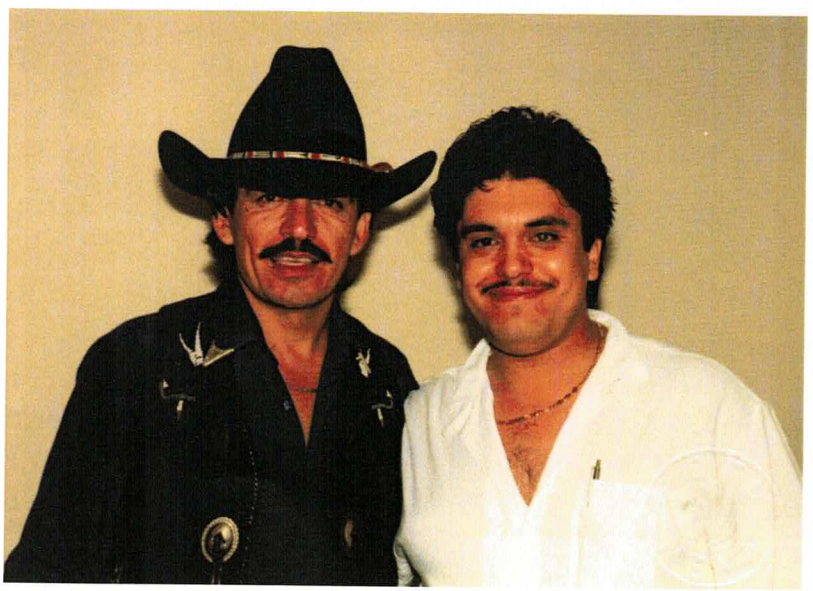
The following year, the Galindos purchased the Marshall Square Theatre from Frank De la Torre and renovations began to convert the former movie theater into a concert, dance and event venue. The original seating was removed, the sloped floor was reconfigured with multiple levels, the stage was expanded, and stage lighting was added. The name Apollo's 2000 is a dedication Galindo's grandfather, Apolinar Esparza, as well as the Greek god Apollo, patron of music and dance.

In the early years, Apollo's 2000 established itself as a venue for weddings and quinceañeras. In the 1990s, the success of these private events allowed the Galindos to begin programming concerts that appealed to the Latino community at a time when this audience was largely ignored. Apollo's 2000 hosted Spanish Rock bands Maná, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Fobia, La Ley, as well as Spanish Pop performers such as Yuri, Ana Gabriel, Joan Sebastian, Jose Jose, Napoleon, and more. Notable Latin jazz artists have also performed at the theater, including Cuban trumpeter Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Palmieri, Paquito de Rivera, The French Orchestra Fatal Mambo, Strunz and Farah. Films, comedy and private events continued to be part of Apollo's 2000 programs in the 1990s.

Mexican pop-rock band Maná performing at Apollo's 2000 in 1992.

In the 1990s, Apollo's 2000 began hosting musicians from Latin America in popular concerts that demonstrated an untapped market for Latin music in Chicago.

In 1996, Apollo's showcased Strunz and Farah, an acoustic guitar duo that combined Latin, Cuban and African influences.



Mexican singer and songwriter Joan Sebastian backstage at Apollo's 2000 with Javier Galindo.

In the 2000's, Apollo's has continued with private events as well as hosting political events and non-profit community organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens and Latinos Progresando. Latino authors and performers, cabarets, children's theater, fashion shows, dances and Lucha Libre have also been staged at Apollo's 2000.

Architect Alexander L. Levy (1872-1955)

The Marshall Square Theatre, now Apollo's 2000, was designed by architect Alexander L. Levy. He was born to Jewish immigrant parents from Prussia in Brookfield, Missouri in 1872 and studied architecture at the University of Illinois. After a stint teaching at Hyde Park High School, Levy established his architectural practice in 1904 with early work consisting of residential and mixed-use buildings.

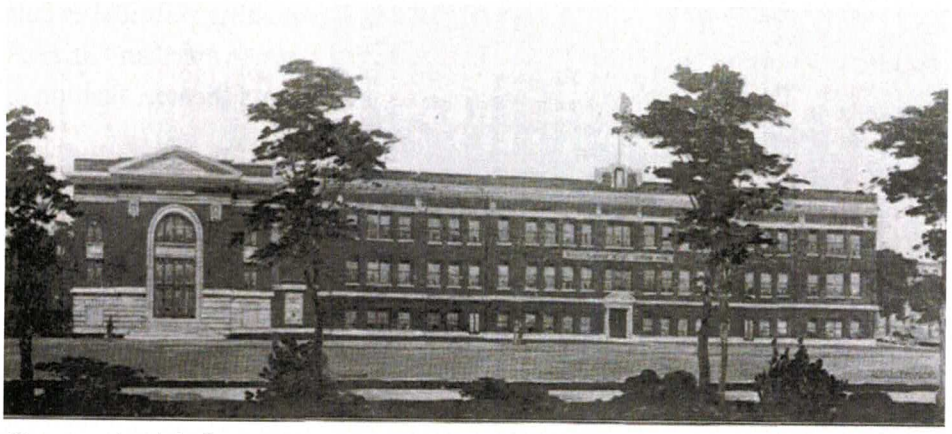
A significant early commission came to Levy in 1906 when he was tasked with designing the Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home at 1548 S. Albany Ave. in North Lawndale. The Classical Revival style orphanage accommodated 300 children and included a synagogue, separate girls' and boys' wings, offices, a dining room, and employee quarters. In addition to designing the building, Levy supported the Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home for many years.

Levy designed a number of synagogues in Chicago, and at least two survive. The oldest is from 1902 and was commissioned by the Ohave Sholom Miriampol congregation. Located at 733 S. Ashland Boulevard, Levy's domed Classical Revival synagogue now is home to St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church. A decade later in 1912, Levy designed Ad Beth Hamedrash Hogodol with Sullivanesque ornament. It still stands at 5129 S. Indiana Avenue and now houses Unity Baptist Church.

Another significant work by Levy is his design for the Douglas Park Auditorium from 1910 at 3202 W. Ogden Ave. The Beaux Arts-style four-story building became a social and cultural center for the large Jewish community in North Lawndale.

In 1912, Levy designed his first theater, the Marshfield at 1650 W. Roosevelt Road on the Near West Side (demolished). It was the first of several that he would design for theater operators Louis and Meyer Marks who are discussed below. The web site Cinema Treasures identifies 15 theaters designed by Levy in Chicago, of this number only Apollo's 2000 survives.

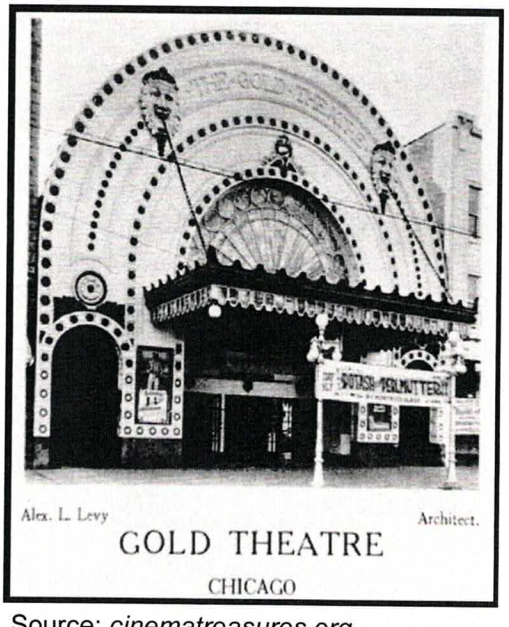
In 1920, Levy formed a partnership with William J. Klein about whom little is known. The architectural firm of Levy & Klein was in business approximately from 1920 to 1939. Levy handled business and client side of the practice and Klein handled the engineering aspects of the firm. Levy's specialty in theater design continued during his partnership with Klein. Important contributions to the firm's theater practice were made by Edward Eichenbaum who joined in 1924 and became the lead designer of the firm's ornate and palatial theaters of the 1920s. Examples of the firm's movie palaces include the Diversey (1925), Marbro (1927), Regal



Source: Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois

Source: Library of Congress. Vergara, Camilo J, photographer. 2011

Noteworthy works by architect Alexander L. Levy include the Marks Nathan Jewish Orphan Home (1906) which still stands at 1548 S. Albany Ave. (top), the Douglas Park Auditorium (1911), Ogden Ave. at S. Kedzie Ave. (middle) and one of his earliest forays into theater design, the Gold Theater (1914) which stood at 3411 W. Roosevelt Road (bottom).



Source: *cinematreasures.org*

(1928) and Granada (1930) theaters. Of this group, only the Diversey survives, now as a vertical mall and theater known as the Century.

In addition to theaters, Levy & Klein built many commercial and residential buildings throughout Chicago, including the North Avenue Baths (1921) at 2039-45 W. North Ave. (a contributing building in the Milwaukee Avenue District, a designated Chicago Landmark), and the Bryn Mawr Apartment Hotel (1928) at 5550 N. Kenmore Ave. (also a designated Chicago Landmark).

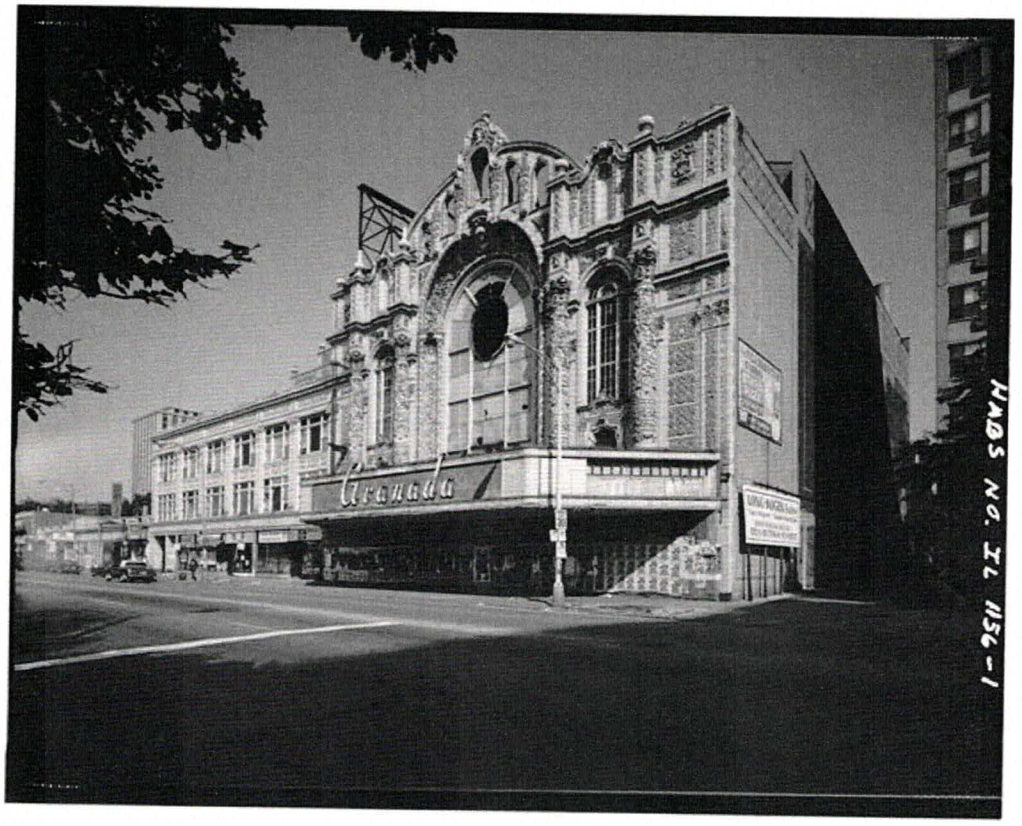
Movie Exhibitors Louis and Meyer Marks

Apollo's 2000 was built as the Marshall Square Theatre by brothers Louis L. and Meyer S. Marks, as well as Julius Goodman. The Marks brothers were early pioneers of the movie theater business in Chicago who began establishing small, nickelodeon theaters in Chicago around 1910. These were almost certainly in existing buildings. However, by 1912 the Marks Brothers had grown large enough to build their first venue, the Marshfield Theater at 1650 W. Roosevelt Road on the Near West Side (demolished). With 296 seats, the Marshfield was typical of a first-generation Chicago cinema. The brothers commissioned architect Alexander Levy to design the Marshfield and they would establish a long relationship with Levy as their business grew over the next two decades. In 1914, the brothers again hired Levy to design the Gold Theater (demolished) at 3411 W. Roosevelt Road in North Lawndale with more than double the seating capacity as the Marshfield.

Along with the Marshall Square Theatre, now Apollo's 2000, in 1917 the Marks Brothers built the Broadway Strand Theater (demolished) at 1641 W. Roosevelt Road on the Near West Side. Architect Levy designed the building with an arched terra-cotta façade and 1,500 seats, placing the Broadway Strand and the Marshall Square theaters in a new, second-generation of the theater design in Chicago.

In 1925, Louis and Meyer Marks established Marks Bros. Theatres, Inc., and began planning larger and more elaborate theater designs known as "movie palaces" similar to the Uptown and Chicago theaters, both designated Chicago Landmarks. To raise capital, the company began selling shares to the public. Advertisements for the stock offering credited the firm's economic stability to its theatres which "offer popular priced entertainment to their patrons to whom theatre-going has become a real and important part of their daily lives."

The Marks' expansion campaign resulted in the construction of two of Chicago's largest and most-elaborated cinemas: the 3,500-seat Granada Theatre at 6427 N. Sheridan Road in Rogers Park completed in 1926; and the 4,000-seat Marbro Theater at 4110 W. Madison Street in Garfield Park, from 1927. Both came from architect Alexander Levy who had by this time had partnered with William J. Klein, though Edward C. Eichenbaum of their staff is credited with both designs in an elaborate Spanish Baroque style of architecture. Both buildings have been



Movie exhibitors Louis and Meyer Marks commissioned two of the largest "movie palaces" in Chicago of the 1920s: the 3,500-seat Granada Theatre at 6427 N. Sheridan Road in Rogers Park completed in 1926; and the 4,000-seat Marbro Theater at 4110 W. Madison Street in Garfield Park, from 1927. Both came from the architectural firm of Levy & Klein, with Edward C. Eichenbaum of the firm credited with the designs. Both buildings have been demolished.

demolished.

1928, the Marks brothers sold all of their theaters to Paramount Publix Corporation (later Paramount Pictures) which hired the Chicago firm of Balaban and Katz to manage and operate the portfolio. Apollo's 2000 appears to be the only Marks Brothers' theater that survives.

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Section 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a recommendation for an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art, or other object within the City of Chicago if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for designation" and that it possesses a significant degree of historic integrity to convey its significance. The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that Apollo's 2000 be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Value as an Example of City, State, or National Heritage

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.

- Apollo's 2000 is the last surviving theater commissioned by Louis and Meyer Marks, Chicago movie exhibitors and theater builders whose business began with a nickelodeon in 1910 to building two of Chicago largest movie palaces, the Granada and Marbro theater in the late 1920s.

- Since 1990, Apollo's 2000 has transformed the historic theater to an event and performance space that contributes to the cultural landscape of Little Village and Chicago's wider Hispanic community by promoting Latin music, lectures and supporting local non-profit organizations.

- Apollo's 2000 showcased Spanish Rock bands in 1990s, a time when this popular genre was overlooked by Chicago promoters. Artists such as Maná, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Fobia and La Ley have graced the stage at Apollo's 2000.

- In addition to Spanish Rock, Apollo's 2000 has hosted performances from other genres of Latin music, including Spanish Pop, Latin Jazz, Cuban, and Mexican regional musical styles.

- Apollo's 2000 has hosted numerous politicians seeking to reach out to the Latino community, including Vice President Al Gore, former Governor Pat Quinn, Congressman Jesús "Chuy" García, and Senator Bernie Sanders.

Criterion 4: Exemplary Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- Apollo's 2000 is located in the former Marshall Square Theatre, a significant "transitional" motion picture theater in Chicago from 1917 spanning the small nickelodeons that came before it and the larger and more elaborate "movie palaces" of the 1920s.

- With its large arch framed by domed towers, as well as its sculptural eagles, and its ornament derived from classicism, the building is a fine example of Beaux-Arts Architecture applied to an early motion picture theater.

- The scale and ornate quality of the building's architecture, on both its interior and exterior, reflect the ideals of historic movie theater design to use architecture as advertisement and to attract customers with a promise of luxury and escape from the ordinary.

Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic interest or value.

As a 107-year-old motion picture theater, Apollo's 2000 retains sufficient physical integrity to convey its historic and architectural value. The vast majority of theaters of this vintage in Chicago have not survived. Credit for the building's endurance is due to the current owners who have maintained the building for over three decades with a combination of events and performances.

Changes to the exterior of the building include refacing of the blade sign and evolution of the marquee, as illustrated on the facing page. These are common changes to historic movie theaters which frequently updated marquees and signage. Other changes to the exterior include new exterior doors, windows and storefront alterations. These changes are typical for commercial buildings and do not impair the building's ability to convey its value.

Alterations to the interior of the auditorium were implemented in 1990 to convert the space from a cinema to an event and performance venue. The original seating was removed, the sloped floor was reconfigured with multiple levels, the stage was expanded, and stage lighting was added. These changes have allowed the building to be profitably reused and do not interfere with the architectural quality of the auditorium which is retained in its overall volume as well as ceiling and wall ornamentation.

To a lesser degree, the lobby floor has been replaced and interior passage doors from the lobby

An early photograph of the theater, showing the original marquee and blade sign. Source: Theater Historical Society of America.

A 1943 photograph showing an expanded marquee and blade sign with neon. Source: Javier Galindo.

By 1972, the neon Marshall Square blade sign had been removed leaving the armature. Source: Theater Historical Society of America.

A current photo showing the marque reduced in width with ornamental flourishes added, and the blade sign refaced.

to the auditorium have been removed. These changes also do not compromise the lobby's richly -ornamented wall and ceiling finishes.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever an area, district, place, building, structure, work of art, or other object is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. Based on its evaluation of Apollo's 2000, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.
- The interior lobby.
- The interior of the auditorium.

The blade sign and marquee have always been part of the Building's exterior elevations. As with many historic theaters, these features have evolved over time in terms of size, material and illumination. The Commission's review of work proposed to the blade sign or marquee should ensure that these continue to be features of the Building, while allowing reasonable change and flexibility to meet new needs.

1990 changes to the interiors of the lobby and auditorium, including floor finishes, new floor platforms, three bars, neon lighting, chandeliers, stage lighting and its ceiling-mounted trusses, cameras, screens, and bathrooms are specifically excluded from the significant historical and architectural features.

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Appendix
My Story: Javier Galindo, owner of Apollo's 2000

The American Dream is a concept deeply ingrained in the United States' cultural identity. It represents the belief that through hard work, determination, and perseverance, individuals can achieve success and prosperity. This dream has historically encompassed ideals such as homeownership, a stable job, and the opportunity for a better life, regardless of one's background or circumstances. The American Dream remains a symbol of aspiration and hope for many in the United States and around the world.

On Thursday, March 23, 1967, my family, and I arrived from Mexico to the United States in pursuit of the American Dream. It was late at night when my parents, siblings and I, Javier Galindo, deboarded the train that brought us from El Paso, Texas to our new home in Chicago located at 2400 S. Troy (located only a few blocks away from the Marshall Square Theater). Within a few days from our arrival to Chicago, my parents decided to take my siblings and I to watch a Mexican movie at the Marshall Square Theater. As a 9-year-old boy, the sight of the illuminated exterior façade and marquee invoked a sense of awe and fascination. I recall walking into the Marshall Square Theater and being completely mesmerized by the grandiose and opulent theater. As we took our seats and watched "El Gato," a black and white Mexican western movie, I never imagined that one day my wife, Mrs. Lidia Galindo, and I would end up owning this beautiful theater.

My wife also migrated from Mexico to Chicago several years after I did in pursuit of her American Dream. Lidia arrived to Chicago in 1982 at the young age of 16 and stayed under the care of her older sister, Mrs. Alicia Corral. She migrated to Chicago for academic purposes and was promptly enrolled to begin college courses that fall at the Harold Washington College formerly the Loop College. She focused her studies in Business Administration with the aspiration of one day owning and operating her own business. I had the opportunity to meet Lidia at Loop College in 1985 and immediately began to court her. I was amazed by not only her beauty but also her intelligence, ambition, and motivation. She was a college student at the age of 16 in a Country where she did not know the language, yet, she was able to graduate from her college program with honors. I found this to be astonishing and admired her for her dedication and perseverance. I knew that together we could make all our dreams come true and we decided to get married on March 1987.

Throughout the 80's I had focused on being a musician and became the president of a Hispanic musicians' syndicate with a membership of about 800 local musicians. By 1986 I was already operating a very successful dancehall in the area with a primary focus on Mexican music. At the time, I was renting out and operating a dancehall located in Chicago. I organized, promoted, and operated the dancehall with the help of Lidia who assisted me with managing the ticket booth, coat check and other areas of the business. We were already on our way to achieving what we believed to be our American Dream until one day when our Dream came crashing

down on us. Unfortunately, in 1987 the ceiling at the dancehall caved in due to a heavy rain storm. Luckily the dancehall was not in use at the time and no one was injured. However, this led me into panic because I had several performances lined up without a space to host the events. I was devastated and did not realize that it was a blessing in disguise that would lead me back to the Marshall Square Theater.

One day I drove down Cermak Road with my disappointment and stress weighing heavily on my shoulders and with little hope of revitalizing my then-failed business. The weight of self-imposed expectations bore down on me like a relentless burden. With each passing street corner, I could not help but feel the weight of my disappointment, longing for a solution or a glimmer of hope to illuminate my uncertain path ahead. As I drove by the Marshall Square Theater, I saw a man standing by the ticket booth and quickly realized that it was Mr. Frank De la Torre, the then-owner of the Theater. Mr. De la Torre had previously asked me if I was willing to manage the space if he converted it to a dancehall which caused me to quickly stop and ask him if he was still interested in offering me such opportunity. Seeing Mr. De la Torre was the glimmer of hope that I was praying for. He confirmed his continued interest in having me manage the potential dancehall which led to several conversations and ultimately resulted in our purchase of the theater.

I had previously had the pleasure of meeting Mr. De la Torre because he was well known and respected in our community. He owned a construction company and several theaters, including the Marshall Square Theater. By 1983 there was a heavy decline in the Hispanic movie industry which led to the inevitable closure of the Marshall Square Theater. Mr. De la Torre was having a difficult time finding a way to reactivate the Theater and feared that the closure would result in the Theater falling into disrepair or potential demolishment of the building. A fate that many neighborhood theaters had to face.

Lidia and I had the experience that he considered crucial to the success and revitalization of the Marshall Square Theater. Ultimately, he offered to sell me the Theater and help me remodel the interior to enable us to operate the Theater as a concert and dancehall. I was amazed by the opportunity that was presenting itself at a time when I was feeling completely defeated. I rushed home to tell Lidia about this amazing opportunity and was met with unconditional support and encouragement from Lidia, Alicia, and their brother. They repeatedly expressed confidence in my ability to revitalize and transform the Theater into a dancehall and pushed me to take a leap of faith. Lidia's siblings were instrumental in helping us find the courage to venture into a new business journey and we are forever grateful for their unconditional support.

We purchased the Theater in 1988 and spent several months reconfiguring and remodeling it to meet the needs of a dancehall and concert venue. We removed all the theater chairs and created a multi-level space with a large dance floor, 3-bars, and a large stage with theater lighting. By March 1989 the Marshall Square Theater reopened its doors as the Apollo's 2000. It was renamed the "Apollo's 2000" to render homage to my late maternal grandfather, Mr. Apolinar Esparza. My grandfather was a role model to whom I looked up to when I was growing up and

inspired me to always pursue my dreams. Naming the Theater after him allowed me to memorialize and honor the significant role he played in my life. In addition, the god "Apollo" in Greek mythology was often referred to as the god of light, music, poetry, and more. He is often depicted with a lyre, a musical instrument, in one hand, and a laurel wreath in the other. The lyre symbolizes his association with music and the arts, while the laurel wreath signifies victory and achievement. Apollo's rich association with music, creativity, and inspiration aligned perfectly with the essence and vision we had for the venue, reflecting our commitment to fostering artistic expression and innovation. In addition, the god Apollo embodied the Greco-Roman architectural interior design of the theater. We were ultimately inspired to name the theater "Apollo's 2000" in consideration of both my grandfather, Apolinar, and the Greek god, Apollo.

The Apollo's 2000 has been family owned and operated since its opening in 1989. Our goal is to continue to operate and manage the venue as a family for generations to come. Lida and I have had the privilege of operating the events space and concert hall with the help of our three daughters, Evelyn, Isis, and Naomi Galindo. Also, of considerable importance in its operation were, amongst other family members, my late parents, Mr. Jaime Galindo and Mrs. Socorro Esparza de Galindo, siblings, and brother-in-law.

Initially, the Apollo's 2000 was intended to serve strictly as a dancehall and concert venue. Lidia and I were confident that we would find success in hosting dances and concerts in this space given our previous success at the other dancehall and my musical career. Unfortunately, we did not find immediate success and instead encountered numerous obstacles. Due to the competitive nature of the industry, we were unable to gain the support of local promoters and instead found them to make strategic decisions to prevent us from succeeding. For approximately two-years, we were filled with the feeling of disappointment and a pervasive sense of sadness and disillusionment. A journey that was once filled with hope, ambition, and tireless dedication suddenly transformed into a landscape of shattered dreams. It is as if the vibrant colors of success had faded into a monochromatic world of "what could have been."

Despite the pain of disappointment, there is often a silver lining – an opportunity to learn, grow, and, in time, the chance to emerge stronger and wiser. While the immediate feeling of failure was a bitter pill to swallow, it was a stepping stone to the future success that led ahead and a source of valuable experience and resilience. The intentional obstacles that were placed by others in the industry forced us to reevaluate and reinvent our business plan. What seemed like a setback at the time turned out to be a catalyst for positive change. It challenged us to step out of our comfort zone, explore new opportunities, and adapt by repurposing the venue for private and special events such as weddings and quinceañeras. By embracing the failure as a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block, we transformed our business, reshaped our strategies, and ultimately found a more sustainable and successful path forward. This reinvention not only made us more resilient but also opened the doors to new horizons that we may have otherwise never discovered. The Apollo's 2000 quickly became a premier and highly sought after private

and special events venue within the Hispanic community by 1991 which gave us unprecedented success and stability.

The stability and success that private events provided the business enabled us revisit our visionary commitment to music. I recognized the undervalued potential of Spanish Rock within the rich tapestry of music and used the Apollo's 2000 to boldly pioneer and invest in the promotion of Spanish Rock events. The investment not only paid off but led to unprecedented success, growth, and establishment of the Apollo's 2000 as a concert hall. By providing a dedicated platform for Spanish Rock musicians, the Apollo's 2000 became a haven for countless up-and-coming musicians who had long yearned for a place to showcase their talent. Amongst such artists were the now globally renowned Spanish Rock groups such as Mana, La Ley, Fobia, and Los Fabulosos Cadillacs. The weekly Spanish Rock events garnered the hearts and loyalty of the vast and vibrant Hispanic community, creating a thriving hub for musicians and concert-goers alike. In addition, it afforded us the opportunity to execute our original vision and exercise our commitment to music.

The success of Spanish Rock events inspired us to explore other genres of music that were undervalued by other local Hispanic music promoters. In the mid to late 90's we began to promote a series of Latin Jazz concerts which were also successful. We sought to celebrate a variety of music genres and invested in premier performers such as Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Palmieri, Paquito de Rivera, The French Orchestra Fatal Mambo, Perez Prado Orchestra and more. These performances drew crowds from throughout the Chicagoland area which gave Lidia and I a great sense of pride and achievement. Our dedication to previously undervalued genres of music not only elevated the prominence of the Apollo's 2000 but also enriched the cultural landscape. The power of music as a bridge between communities is exemplified at the Apollo's 2000, and its legacy of growth and success is a testament to our belief in the transformative influence of music in our lives.

We take pride in our diverse and multifaceted approach to hosting events. Beyond our captivating concerts, we have opened our doors to an extensive array of experiences that reflect the richness of cultural diversity while uplifting and showcasing the vibrancy of our community. From hosting adrenaline-pumping Mexican wrestling matches to providing a sacred space for religious services, the Apollo's 2000 has transcended conventional boundaries. In the early 2000's we produced an immersive child play, Cinderella, which transported young minds into a world of wonder. In addition, we have had prominent political figures grace our stage for both public and private events. Notably, we have had the privilege of hosting political private events, including, without limitation, election parties for Congressman Jesus G. "Chuy" Garcia, a private event for politicians who attended the 1996 Democratic National Convention, an event hosted in 2000 for the presidential candidate and then-current Vice President Al Gore, and many more.

The Apollo's 2000 has also welcomed a wide spectrum of thought leaders and speakers, engaging our community with topics ranging from philosophy and film to mainstream issues

and the fascinating realm of extraterrestrials. Amongst such speakers was the late Argentinian philosopher, singer and songwriter, Facundo Cabral. We take pride in being a place where ideas and stories come to life and a space that evolves with the times and reflects the myriad interests and passions of our community. We have been honored to be able to make a contribution to our community by uniting it through the transcendent language of the arts.

As of the opening of the Apollo's 2000 in 1989, we have always remained committed to the preservation and cultivation of our Hispanic heritage and the development of our Little Village community. Our goal has been for the Apollo's 2000 not to just be a place for entertainment, but for it to be the community's heartbeat and cultural hub. By embracing a dynamic approach to its purpose, we have been able to forge impactful partnerships with non-profit organizations and various community groups, transforming the Apollo's 2000 into a hub for social connection. Some of these organizations include, LULAC, Latinos Progresando, local schools, various chambers of commerce, the Rotary International, and other organizations. These collaborations have allowed the Apollo's 2000 to open its doors to a diverse array of events, from charitable fundraisers to educational workshops, political events, and cultural celebrations. The venue has become a canvas for meaningful experiences, where the shared goal is to make a positive impact on the community.

This evolution has not only enriched the venue's identity but has also fostered a spirit of unity and collective growth. The Apollo's 2000 is now not just a place to host events; it is a catalyst for change, an emblem of community support, and a space where ideas, passions, and aspirations come to life. It represents the unwavering dreams of two immigrants who arrived to Chicago with the burning desire to achieve the American Dream. We hope that our journey, marked by resilience and unyielding determination, has not only transformed our family's life but has also become a source of inspiration for all who encounter our story.

From humble beginnings, Lidia and I brought our dreams to the vibrant city of Chicago, where we had the privilege of meeting and were able to embark on a journey of hard work and endless possibilities. Our shared vision of success and unbreakable spirit has steered us through challenges, disappointments, and triumphs. Today, as we reminisce on the history of the Apollo's 2000, we honor the dreams that brought us here and the dedication that built our foundation. The Apollo's 2000 is a reminder that the American Dream is not merely a notion; it is a living testament to the boundless potential that lies within each of us, waiting to be unlocked through passion, perseverance, and a relentless pursuit of our aspirations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF CHICAGO

Brandon Johnson, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development

Ciere Boatright, Commissioner

Kathleen Dickhut, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Citywide Planning

Project Staff

Matt Crawford, author, project manager.

The Bureau of Citywide Planning would like to thank Andy Pierce, Brian Wolf, Patrick Seymour and Steve Kaplowitz of the Theater Historical Society of America for research support. The Bureau also thanks Patrick Pyszka, Principal Photographer, City of Chicago Department of Assets, Information and Services (AIS) for the professional photography featured in this report.

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December, 2023; revised and reprinted, February, 2024.